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WINTHROP CHANDLER (?): MRS. EBENEZER DEVOTION
Brookline Historical Society, Brookline, Massachusetts

ART IN AMERICA

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

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AMERICAN AND ENGLISH PORTRAITURE: DEMOCRACY *versus* ARISTOCRACY

BY LAURIE EGLINGTON KALDIS

Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design

PROVIDENCE has recently been the scene of an exhibition* which has provided a unique opportunity to study American painting in relation to that created in England at the same period. Under the title "Old and New England," the museum exhibited a number of previously unknown paintings of the self-taught, anonymous limners together with a group of canvases by such independent painters as Feke and Ralph Earl, and the work of Anglo-Americans like West, Copley and Stuart. These were hung for the first time side by side with paintings by 22 artists of the British School, mainly 18th century.

In the past there has been a strong tendency in this country to think of American 18th century painting in terms of men like West, Copley and

*Organized by Gordon Washburn at the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island, January 19-February 18, 1945.

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Stuart, all of whom so carefully modeled their style after the British that their works now in the National Gallery, London, are catalogued "British School"! The portraits by unknown limners, on the other hand, were until some twenty years ago consigned to the attic, along with many other ancestral trappings. Of recent years they have figured in exhibitions of early American paintings, but have still remained to a great extent the province of the antiquarian.

The comparative method of presentation followed in this exhibition has had the effect of pointing up the native character of much of American painting. The differences between the American and English approach, rather than the similarities, have tended to become clearer in the process, just as prolonged association of the two peoples since the war has brought the realization that however common their origin may have been, their descendants have undergone considerable modification. As Oscar Wilde has so well expressed it, "we are united nations divided by a common language."

The intention of this article is to mention some of the characteristics which distinguish the native painting of New England, and to suggest briefly some of the historical and psychological factors which have tended to encourage their development. In view of the fact that the Providence exhibition was unable to draw on either British sources, or the Frick and Huntington collections in this country, the illustrations in this article have been chosen to represent the leaders of the British School at their best. Since the existence of unknown 17th century folk painters in England is highly speculative, and the recognized artists of the same period were much more foreign than English, the field will be narrowed to 18th century painting.

American painting may be clearly distinguished in an exhibition of this sort by the directness of approach on the part of both the artist and his subject, and the former's keen interest in the portrayal of character. Another characteristic of the American paintings is the subtle manner in which they seem to communicate with the observer. In the case of the women, these points are especially striking. No one could possibly mistake the nationality of Huldah Bradley, painted by Earl in 1794 (illustrated), or that of Mrs. Yates, whom Stuart portrayed after his return from England about 1793. No well-bred English woman would ever have held the observer with such steady gaze. Even had she been so bold, any proper English painter would have masked her glance, transforming it into a look



RALPH EARL: HULDAH BRADLEY
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



REYNOLDS: JANE, COUNTESS OF HARRINGTON
Henry Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California



RALPH EARL: MRS. WILLIAM MOSELY AND HER SON CHARLES
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven



GAINSBOROUGH: BENJAMIN TRUMAN
The Brewery, Spitalfields



FEKE: MRS. JONATHAN MASON, JR.
Thomas G. Hazard, Jr., Narragansett, Rhode Island



GAINSBOROUGH: MRS. GRACE DALRYMPLE ELLIOTT
Duveen Brothers, New York

of remote reserve, or he would have diverted her interest toward some object off-stage, as does Gainsborough in the portrait of the Honorable Frances Duncombe. In 18th century England, should a woman chance to be endowed with character, it must at all costs be dissembled from the world. This was no disadvantage in New England, where life had been one of struggle for many years. Strength of character as well as of body was needed to survive. Being in the minority, and much sought after on all sides, women early became conscious of their power — a quality clearly expressed in Earl's portrait of Mrs. William Moseley (illustrated).

In many of the portraits of women a strong feeling of tenseness is communicated. This is especially marked in the portrait of Mrs. John Bush painted in 1791 and attributed to McKay. Whether in this particular case the feeling of unease was caused by wearing such an ultra-fashionable French hat, or the prospect of hell-fire in the hereafter promoted by Jonathan Edwards about the middle of the 18th century, must remain an interesting speculation. Another light is cast on New England women by the books which Mrs. Bush and many of the sitters hold in their hands. These are no mere artifice, calculated to impress, but a reminder of the words of Abigail Adams, when she said: "If we mean to have heroes, statesmen and philosophers, we should have learned women." And the women of New England measured up to this standard. They read, of course, the Bible, and after that Milton, Burke and Pope.

What a contrast the sincerity of these portraits presents when compared with the doll-like idealization of Gainsborough's Mrs. Grace Dalrymple Elliott painted in 1778 (illustrated). The delight which the artist took in reproducing the pearly texture of her skin and the frothy satin of the bodice is completely foreign to anything which either Copley or Stuart, even in their best van Dyck manner, might have produced. There is a sensuous delight in his manipulation of paint akin to that of a child intent on conjuring up some perfectly delicious dish out of marshmallow, white of eggs and ice cream, with maybe a dash of pistachio added — a rococo quality expressing a point of view toward life unthinkable to a people to whom "earthly care was a heavenly discipline," as the title of one of Harriet Beecher Stowe's later books expresses it. The bust portrait of a lady painted by Joseph Highmore, on the other hand, has the moving quality inherent in a beautiful woman, when that beauty is not external but an expression of her personality. This painting, too, has the strange power of communication which lends so much charm and significance to the

delightful English Conversation Pieces, such as that of Arthur Devis which was included in the Exhibition.

The portraits of New England men, on the other hand, have an added dynamism that is disturbing. Feke in his self-portrait, painted about 1735, Mrs. Ebenezer Devotion (frontispiece), portrayed by Winthrop Chandler(?) in 1770, and Bradford Hubbard depicted by Reuben Moulthrop(?) (illustrated) all look forth from the canvas with a steady glance that holds the observer's eye unfaltering. Nor is this quality absent in the early work of such a finished painter as Stuart. His portrait of Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse (cover), painted when the artist was twenty-one and a year after he had arrived in London, is a masterpiece of sensitive, though direct portrayal, to which is already added some of the technical finish which Stuart gained in England. It represents, moreover, a landmark in Stuart's painting life. For, three years later, with the canvas of James Ward, he cast his choice in favor of the English goal of technical sophistication, instead of the more native virtue of psychological insight. The change in the general character of Stuart's work under British influence brings out rather clearly the difference in emphasis in England from that in America. In the anglicized portrait of James Ward, for example, the interest is focussed on the bravura brushwork and dramatization of the subject, following the fashion set by van Dyck.

Even in the case of such a realist as Hogarth, who won little popularity with his honest portrayals of people as they were, there is still a basic difference in approach from that of the typically American painters like Ralph Earl and Moulthrop, or whoever actually painted Bradford Hubbard. Hogarth's portrait of William James, for example, is without doubt an excellent portrayal of the man — a solid, well-modeled representation of the way he *looked*. The important thing to Hogarth is the physical make-up of the man, to which end the careful, brilliant painting of the gold braid contributed much. With Bradford Hubbard, on the other hand, the man's inner life, his thoughts and aspirations, as it were, is what has impressed the artist, not merely his physical attributes. Striking as are the large yellow buttons and the crisply painted frilled vest, they do not compete for attention with the personality of the subject as in the case of Mr. James' braid. Rather, they help to build up the abstract, yet plastic design, serving to echo and intensify the piercing quality of the eyes. Such subtleties are outside the ken of the English 18th century artists. A similar emphasis on the physical attributes of the man is seen in Reynolds' excel-

lent likeness of Samuel Johnson, which is among the artist's most direct and forceful portrayals.

The portrait of Bradford Hubbard and other works of self-taught limners in the Exhibition disprove the suggestion sometimes put forth that the bodies were painted ahead of time and the heads filled in afterward. This was true in a limited branch of 19th century practice, but not in that of the 18th. Earl, for example, was wont to spend weeks living with a patron, painting members of the family. He therefore came to know them intimately, in their own surroundings.

In England, on the other hand, a popular artist had to devise ways of keeping up with the demand for portraits, so that Reynolds would often turn out a likeness in four and a half hours. The following extract from a letter which Reynolds wrote in 1777 to Daniel Daulby, a prospective client, is an excellent commentary on his method: "It requires in general three sittings, about an hour and a half each time, but if the sitter chooses it the face could be painted in a day. It is divided into separate times for the convenience of the person who sits. When the face is finished the rest is done without troubling the sitter."

Gainsborough and Highmore had the reputation for finishing their own portraits. Gainsborough especially was very particular about it, though it was a branch of art he followed only in order to supply the financial demands made by two greedy daughters. One of his most successful portrayals is that of Benjamin Truman (illustrated), made in 1770, in which the gentleman is shown standing in a "picturesque" landscape background. Unfortunately the genuine feeling for nature which Gainsborough expressed in one or two of his earlier Conversation Pieces — for example, the charming one of Mr. and Mrs. Andrews — has already faded in the face of the ever-pressing need for money. Common sense, a watchword of the times, again prevailed over enthusiasm.

The most significant factor on the side of the American artist was the advanced political development which New England enjoyed, and which encouraged a common understanding between artist and sitter. Both were members of an enlightened middle class — a situation not paralleled in England at the time. Both, too, fervently subscribed to the idea of freedom which had spurred a handful of Puritans more than three thousand miles across the ocean to coax a semblance of the Promised Land out of an ungrateful soil. The democratic idea had been struggling toward the light for centuries, and was cherished in the 18th century by English philosophers

and liberal statesmen like John Locke and Edmund Burke. It found fervent support in the practice of the Puritans who based their philosophy of life on their own interpretation of the Bible, fused with the teaching of John Locke. God had made the world and saw that it was good. Man was His handicraft and as such to be respected. A new value was thus set on the individual, which was further fostered by the introduction of free public education in 1647. Man enjoyed a new self-esteem. As S. Foster Damon so inimitably put it in a recent lecture at the Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design: "It was almost inevitable then that in New England this new self-respect and self-esteem should have found expression in a native school of portraiture — a new kind of portraiture: a realistic and unflattering record of the individual. To prettify would have been an indignity to the sitter and an insult to his Creator." This point of view was a boon to the New England artist; without it a portrait like that of Anne Pollard, for example, would have been unthinkable.

In England, on the other hand, the industrial revolution was barely making itself felt by the middle of the century and the consequent growth of a strong middle class was yet to come. Far from having any close relation with his sitter, as we have noted existed in New England in great measure, the English portraitist was the servant of the aristocracy whom he painted almost exclusively. He was, as it were, on the outside looking in. Instead of any religious motivation, a materialist outlook was the driving force. After the Reformation, the patronage of art was transferred from the church to the aristocracy — an aristocracy which had mushroomed in the late 17th century under the dissolute rule of the Restoration Stuarts, and in the early 18th century was watered by the rise to power of a new mercantile class, encouraged by the final check set on royal despotism after the Revolution of 1688. Instead of church spires, the towers of noble mansions sprang up over the land. And, naturally, portraits were needed to lend their owners dignity and prestige, and to bring color into dark paneled rooms. The old aristocracy welcomed portraiture as a means of affirming their position; the new as a step up the ladder. After Hogarth's failure in the first half of the 18th century to make a financial success of painting Conversation Pieces and moral subjects, no artist tried seriously to paint for the people; they set themselves to supply the demands of their aristocratic patrons for portraits. Not the honest portrayals which Hogarth had found unprofitable and which pleased the middle class clients on the other side of the Atlantic, but idealizations designed to flatter the subject



REUBEN MOULTHROP (?): BRADFORD HUBBARD
New Haven Colony Historical Society



FOOTE: SELF PORTRAIT (painted c. 1725)
Lent by Reverend Henry W. Foote, Belmont, Massachusetts



REYNOLDS: SELF PORTRAIT
Uffizi, Florence

and increase his sense of importance, both in his own eyes and those of others. No wonder that royalty was often the best patron.

In the 17th century the "grand manner" of van Dyck and his followers immediately suited these needs. At a later date the models for this type of portraiture were sought by Reynolds in Italy, where the fashion for the neoclassic held the stage — a tendency which received an impetus around the middle of the 18th century through the excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and Winckelman's publication based on these events. The essence of the neoclassic was the selection of what was best in the finest art of the past — an eclectic process which naturally leads to an absence of emotion. This makes a great deal of 18th century art extremely dull and empty of content. Instead of the American emphasis on the particular, in England the accent was placed on the general; society, not the individual, was important. Sir Joshua expressed this point of view in his fourth *Discourse*, where he says: "If a portrait-painter is desirous to raise and improve his subject he has no other means than by approaching it to the general idea. He leaves out all the minute breaks and peculiarities in the face, and changes the dress from a temporary fashion to one more permanent, which has annexed to it no idea of meanness from its being familiar to us. But if an exact resemblance of an individual be considered as the sole object to be aimed at, the portrait-painter will be apt to lose more than he gains by the acquired dignity taken from general nature. It is very difficult to ennoble the character of a countenance, but at the expense of the likeness, which is what is most generally required by such as sit to the painter."

The aims and method described here are admirably exemplified in Reynolds's portrait of Jane, Countess of Harrington (illustrated). According to the neoclassic conception it was the destiny of the painter in the grand manner to convert common clay into gold. And that he would have found Huldah Bradley common clay there is no doubt! Gainsborough has followed the same general recipe, without the classical drapes, in his portrait of the Honorable Frances Duncombe, already mentioned. On this question of later interpretations of the classic ideal, Nietzsche has maintained that English painters misunderstood it. By leaving out the motivating force — passion — they translated the Greek ideal of self-mastery into an intellectual abstraction.

The contrast of this sophisticated, polished art of England only serves to emphasize the extraordinary degree of plastic form which some Ameri-

can paintings have achieved. This quality of form accounts very largely for the dynamic communication already pointed out in the self-portrait of Feke, and the equally penetrating portrayal of Bradford Hubbard. The Feke self-portrait, for instance, far from being painted in the flat manner reminiscent of medieval painting, seems to derive remarkable solidity from its dependence upon cylindrical form. By a kind of empathy it communicates an intense feeling of satisfaction and security. A portrait which has a similar effect on the observer is that of Mrs. Jonathan Mason, Jr. (illustrated), which, it has been suggested by two critics, may be the early work of Stuart. The extremely abstract portrait of Mrs. Anne Pollard, painted by an anonymous artist in 1721, is, on the other hand, built up on the basis of the cone.

It is fairly clear then that such artists as these, cut off as they were from the European art tradition, looked at the plastic images which objects formed in their own minds and painted what they saw within. This, after all, was the only approach open to men like the Sumerians and Egyptians, for example, since they lived before the discovery of perspective by the Greeks in the 5th century B. C. Dr. Henri Frankfort terms this approach "ideoplastic."^{*} In explanation he says at the same time that he understands by the word ideoplastic the sense that "the artist renders what he *knows* rather than what he sees from the place he happens to be occupying at any given moment."

Dr. Frankfort makes the point that both the Egyptians and the Mesopotamians have a tendency to render all organic forms geometrically: in Egypt the basis is the cube; in Mesopotamia, the cylinder and the cone. Ideoplastic art, it should be understood, is not necessarily organized on a basis of geometric forms, although Dr. Frankfort notes in the case of the sculpture from Khafajah that it seems to be so ordered during the periods of greatest creativity. The important point about ideoplastic art, whether in sculpture or painting, is that it is essentially based on a distillation of the essence from many experiences organized in the mind and copied from that.

English 18th century artists would have found these American ideoplastic paintings incredibly crude. But in the meantime Cézanne and other modern artists have opened our eyes to the importance of the wealth of artifacts excavated in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, the Cyclades, China, during the last hundred and fifty years — not only for archaeologists and

^{*}See article on *Sumerian Sculpture*, by Dr. Henri Frankfort in *Burlington Magazine*, March, 1935.

special students in these fields, but for those who would understand the history of art as a whole. In the light of these discoveries, negro and child art, to mention only two examples, far from being considered today the accidents they once were, take their place among the traditional forms of art expression.

To conclude, in America an unusually advanced political development prepared the ground for independent, self-taught painters in New England — cut off as they were from the forms of traditional painting — to create a democratic art of portraiture. Religious idealism provided the driving power. These portraits were almost always characterized by honesty and keen perception of character; were often dynamic, and occasionally remarkable for their feeling for plastic form. Despite their obvious technical superiority, English painters were, from the point of view of social history, at considerable disadvantage, when compared with a young race in full vigor. Britain had arrived at a point in the 18th century when the quality of reflection was more esteemed than that of enthusiasm.

Had the contributions of the two countries been able to merge, however, what an art might have come forth! Had, for example, the painter of Bradford Hubbard possessed Romney's facility with brush and paint he might have become an American Goya. But Stuart, the one American who had both the psychological penetration and the technical mastery to approach such an idea — as is indicated in his early portrait of Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse and in that of Mrs. Yates painted after his return from England — did not recognize the force inherent in the philosophy of the New World and turned instead to the Old. And so the great achievements of both America and England have remained not primarily in the fields of art, or even music, but in those of literature and political philosophy.

ALEXANDRE JACOVLEFF

BY MARTIN BIRNBAUM

New York City

IT WAS at John Sargent's suggestion that I first went to the restaurant La Biche on the Rue des Martyrs in Paris, not merely to feast on incomparable *canard aux petits pois*, but to see the wall decorations and drawings on which the distinguished American painter lavished almost extravagant praise. These works were by Alexandre Jacovleff (1887-1938), one of the many Russian *émigrés* who were then enriching the cultural life of France and they revealed the hand of an exceptionally endowed master. With the help of Dunoyer de Segonzac, one of his great admirers, I lost no time in finding the elusive Russian's studio on the summit of a hill overlooking Paris near the Moulin de la Galette, and when his singularly elegant form came bounding toward me through a garden gateway, I felt instantly that his was a unique individuality. I was struck by the suggestion of a great latent force in that glowing unshadowed face, sparkling with gaiety and intelligence but also marked by virile refinement. It was framed from ear to ear by a quaint, trim ribbon of a beard and this gave him a resemblance to the god Pan. Later, I was not surprised to learn that primitive tribes of Central Africa thought he was a spirit of the woods possessing magical powers. Sophisticated *habitués* of the Chaumière Normande — one of his preferred restaurants — called him the "Faun," and exiled Russian friends referred to him affectionately as "Pirip," a mythological centaur with lashing tail, which he used as a personal symbol carved on his ivory letter-seal.

We mounted the four flights to a studio littered with drawings and paintings. Almost all of the latter were in cool tempera for Jacovleff had already grown to dislike shiny, sticky oil paint. Many of the heads of Chinese and Africans were drawn larger than life and his style was clearly related to that of other Russians of my acquaintance — Gregorieff, Sorin, Soudbinin — and especially Vasilli Choukhaieff, his *camarade d'atelier*, with whom he decorated a Moscow concert hall and held a joint exhibition. Although he was about to leave Paris on a vacation, Jacovleff's living rooms were in perfect order. Beside the working studio in which an athlete's horizontal bar was conspicuous, there was a small library or lounge filled with fascinating books, the entire contents of which the learned artist seemed to have digested. Rare and curious traveller's trophies were arranged on special shelves. His bedroom was quite luxuriously appointed as befitted



ALEXANDRE JACOVLEFF



JACOVLEFF: MARTIN BIRNBAUM
Martin Birnbaum, New York



JACOVLEFF: MODEL WASHING HER HAIR
Brooklyn Museum

a well-groomed gentleman who was, however, not a fop. His precious toilet articles recalled the priceless ones given by the banker Walter Berry to the novelist Henry James. In the cabinets, Jacovleff stored a fine collection of antique iridescent glass and other treasures about which he talked like a savant, but the most exciting incident of this first visit was the privilege of examining the artist's innumerable pocket notebooks. These disclosed the fact that his artistic career, although carefully and intelligently disciplined, had obviously been no dreary monotonous treadmill. Every step in his evolution was an adventure. While Europe was on fire, he had crossed Mongolia on horseback with funds from a travelling scholarship granted by his school in Petrograd. The artistic treasures of Italy had already inspired him at first hand. In 1924, black chieftains of Central Africa were posing for him. The strange Congo River landscapes, the burning rocky deserts and the huge banyans bathed in queer African light, became artistic material. The flora and fauna of the remotest regions were familiar to him and in 1929, two years before starting, he was already acquiring his equipment for the overland journey across Asia, planned for Citroën by his friend George Marie Haardt, famous as the leader of the *Croisière Noire* — the celebrated earlier expedition across the Sahara into the very heart of Africa. These notebooks were a practically complete artistic diary which bore eloquent testimony to his inquiring mind and his amazing gifts as a draughtsman. They were not unlike some of Delacroix' journals — artistic reportage of a unique kind. His notation was as vivid and even more rapid and exact than the French romantic master's and you became Jacovleff's travelling companion as you turned the pages. They reflect the sunny disposition of the artist who was interested in every activity of his fellow-men. Here the monstrous figure of a gigantic Japanese wrestler, there the gestures of a nervous fencer are caught in the most difficult attitudes. Utensils, clothes and strange details in profusion are minutely studied with a tireless enthusiasm worthy of Menzel. Those who have no access to the little books can, in a slight measure, enjoy their quality from the illustrated margins of the printed folios. These countless pencil sketches are great pageants in miniature. A French admirer has said that the series of tiny images are like the fragments of a cinematographic film and one expects to see the movements of the figures continued on successive pages. Often they served as preparations for more highly finished drawings and to refresh his memory for elaborated paintings but most of them were created solely for the purpose of absorbing the essence of the race or animal they depict.

I longed to become the owner of one of the sketchbooks, but I had to wait until after the artist died before my possessive instinct was satisfied. Modestly explaining his reluctance to part with any of them, he said, "Even though I am now a French citizen, I am a Russian artist, and if in the course of time my work will prove to have value, these notebooks will show how my art developed. I have never given one to anybody and when I die, I hope they will all find their way to the school in Leningrad where I was first encouraged." It hurt him later to find that the government of the Soviet Union looked upon him as a political renegade and refused the gift of one of the finest of his paintings executed in China.

The sketches in the earliest of the notebooks show that affinity to Piero della Francesca, Melozzo da Forlì and other Italians of the School of Ferrara which was pointed out by his friend, Victor Goloubeff, in the excellent introduction to the first folio reproducing the chief spoils of the artist's indefatigable industry in China and Japan, where he had spent two years. These firmly felt Oriental pictures, surprisingly sensitive in spite of their uncompromising severity, made a sensation not only in Paris but also in Peking, where they were first shown. Because the four Chinese characters, Ya Kou Lo Fou meaning Happiness, approximate the sound of his name, he signed many of these works with them, and here one cannot resist the temptation to quote in free translation a passage from one of his letters sent from Peking. "I am poised on the wall near the massive tower Cheng Men and gaze down on the city. To the North, where the Manchu section spreads out in the cool mystery of still indistinct colors, the purple walls and the golden roofs of the palaces emerge. Innumerable delicate fumes rise slowly, penetrated and subdivided by rays of light. They are the breath of life which awakens at the touch of dawn. The sun calls forth sounds, eager to fill these vague forms with dynamic vibrations, recaptured from the shadows. Tones imperceptible a moment ago, take turns with one another and then harmonize. Now I hear the tinkling of the strolling coiffeur's copper plates; the double bladed knife of the grinder cuts the quiet air in two with its strident notes; the porter's cry seems like a rhythmic lamentation — and all these sounds group themselves and interlace in the strengthening rays of the yellow and blue dawn. They assume tangible form and tell us the prodigious legend of life, with which is contrasted the bleak silence, the legend of death, the end of the city imperial, the forbidden city." Jacovleff did not attempt to reconstruct the serene golden age of the celestial flowery kingdom. The contemporary scene more



JACOVLEFF: PIERROT
Grand Central Art Galleries, New York



JACOVLEFF: A GAME OF BOUS KASHI
Grand Central Art Galleries, New York

than answered his purpose and he saw it all beautifully. He was fascinated by the Mandarins and beggars, the princesses with their Pekingese dogs, the almond-eyed children with their pet birds in precious cages decorated with jade, the seated musicians strumming on their instruments, the butchers, the holy llamas, the muscular seaweed gatherers, and above all, by the gorgeous resplendent artificiality of the Oriental theatres, both in China and Japan. The Chinese critics declared that the drawings and paintings of the then thirty-year-old Russian were the first pictures by a European, which interpreted their race with acute understanding, and were worthy of comparison with works by native masters.

From that time forward, as the range of Jacovleff's travels widened, his genius revealed many other peoples to themselves. The unequalled intensity of his kaleidoscopic racial characterization was recognized as unique. Not only the essential but also the obscure, fantastic traits of a people were quickly analyzed by those brilliant penetrating eyes. Whether he was drawing a Mangbettu mother with an elongated head, the enigmatic countenance of a llama, an Afghan bandit, a primitive Asiatic polo player, a musician in Madagascar, a Mongolian war-lord, a Tunisian dancer, a heavy jowled oriental priest, a Capri fisherman, or an American negro, his sympathetic but relentless vision fathomed the hidden qualities of all their respective races. As their pre-destined interpreter, he took them all seriously and I never found caricatures of primitive people in the notebooks. Nor was he ever at a loss dealing with such varied subject matter. These foreign baffling countenances were made simple and human. With a passionate intuition which served as a background for his consummate skill, he created an invisible emotional background for these correct ethnological presentments which resulted in figures of proud barbaric vehemence. To each he gave its peculiar racial beauty and poetry, its hieratic quality and mystery. He had a special talent for entering speedily into intimate friendly relations with so-called savages and when I travelled in North and Central Africa following Jacovleff's footsteps, I found many natives who remembered him. Those who were fortunate to see him at work while he was the official artistic adviser to the Citroën expeditions across Africa and Asia, say that he would fill pages with notes when the motor cars were racing through unfamiliar regions, and he turned out magnificent studies without any apparent effort while the caravan was pitching tents. He had trained his body to work all the time. Action of some sort seemed indeed to be almost imperative, and he never suffered from ennui. If suitable models were not available, as was the case among the Roman

ruins of North Africa or at Palmyra, he would collect fragments of ancient glass which he would patiently repair and piece together, until he boasted a really fine collection of such antique *bibelots*. He was never idle and no obstacles were allowed to interfere with artistic activity. On the great trek from Beirut through Syria, Iran and Afghanistan, over the Khyber Pass and the roof of the world at Gilgit, across the Gobi Desert and Mongolia, unfriendly mountain chains and endless arid plains were overcome. Not the intense heat nor the bitter cold, no impassable floods or danger from attacking robbers interfered with his studies of strange environments and racial types with which he came in contact. What energy and divine enthusiasm he must have had to do so much good work under such conditions! Nomad chiefs who would have warred on the expedition, allowed it to pass unmolested, in exchange for a pastel of the local ruler by the Russian magician, and even these remote Asiatic tribesmen recognized that his portraits, without being overwrought, were astonishingly, one might say, violently alive. The sitters are never guilty of the sin of posturing, and every distinctive facet of their singular personalities is vigorously expressed. There is a logical coherence about them. Not commonplace cleverness, but masterly assurance and infallible certainty characterize them. Some contemporary artists, who must have felt humiliated and discouraged by such bewildering uncanny ability, referred to Jacovleff rather disdainfully as a man who possessed merely a photographic eye, but no camera ever seized a character so profoundly and with such communicative power.

As our acquaintance developed into friendship, I found that he had a rare sense of humor and between luncheon courses at the *Chaumière Normande*, he would release pieces of crumpled paper converted by moisture into caterpillars which actually squirmed and crawled, or he would make pencil notes of other diners whom he observed with twinkling eyes but without malice. It would have been a wonderful experience to spend months in the company of such an artist and it was therefore a great disappointment to learn that being an American citizen made it practically impossible for me to become a member of the *Croisière Jaune*. Aside from diplomatic difficulties he warned me that I could probably not stand the rigorous physical hardships. Jacovleff, who was a fine athlete in spite of being a gourmet, was not only a familiar figure in the best restaurants of Paris, but was himself an excellent amateur cook. If put to the test, however, he was not fastidious and in the northern Asiatic deserts, he could thrive on foul-smelling tea into which yak grease had been melted, whereas



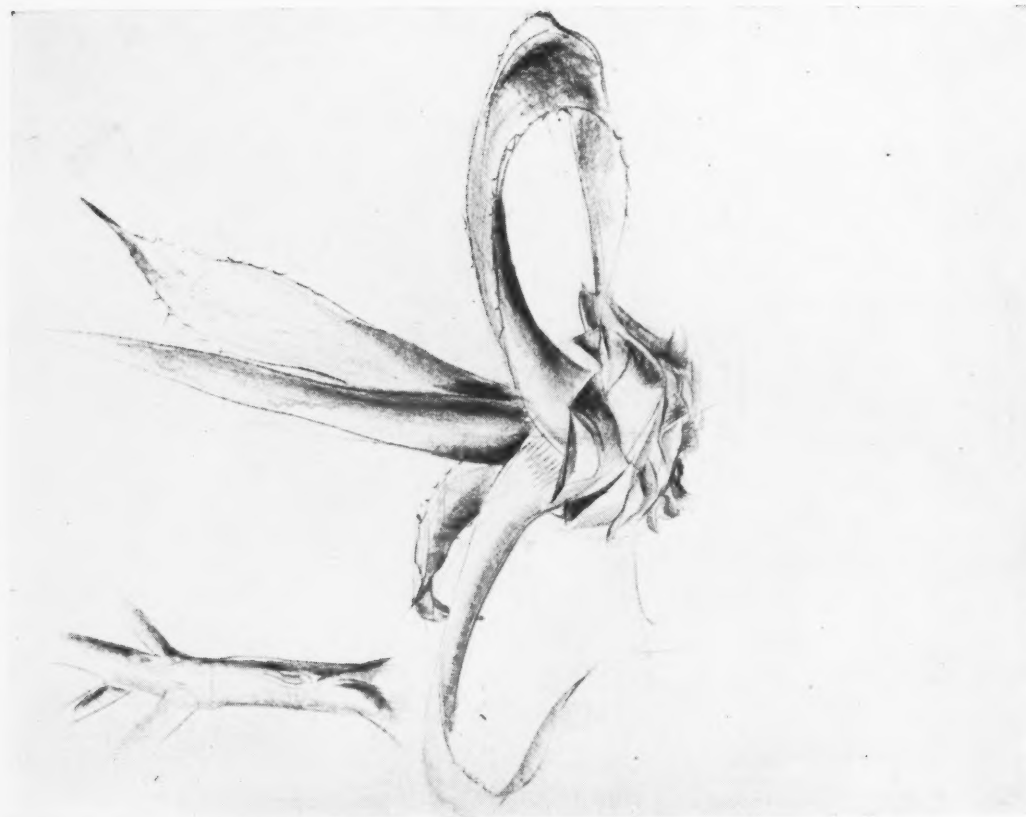
JACOVLEFF: AN INTIMATE CONCERT IN HUE, INDOCHINA
Grand Central Art Galleries, New York



JACOVLEFF: IL PICADOR, MEXICO
Grand Central Art Galleries, New York



JACOVLEFF: STUDY OF DRAPERY
Private Collection



JACOVLEFF: STUDY OF CENTURY PLANT
Private Collection

in Africa he would eat locusts with wandering Bedouins, or join the natives of the Belgian Congo when they feasted on toasted termites. He was an excellent swimmer who had learned diving from Japanese pearl fishers, and he took wonderful submarine photographs with a water tight apparatus of his own construction. I recall that after we visited the aquarium at the Paris Exposition, he did not rest until he acquired goggles and a set of rubber flappers or fins, for undersea swimming. He was indeed one of the most versatile men. His lively interest in classical antiquities has already been touched upon, and he could make lacquer as well as attractive book-bindings. He was an outstanding authority on Chinese and Japanese drama. He experimented with lithography and etched the illustrations for a deluxe edition of René Marán's famous prize winning novel, "Batouala." Ida Rubinstein commissioned him to design settings and costumes for "Semiramis," one of her ballets, and not unlike our clever Maxfield Parrish, he made admirable pieces of furniture. Versatility in itself has, of course, rarely been the mark of a great artist, but one might call to mind Renaissance masters whose complexity of interests did not hamper their genius.

Up to the time when we first met, Jacovleff's career had been divided into clearly marked periods. The student days under his able teacher, Kardofsky, at the Academy of Fine Arts in Petrograd, were followed by a travelling scholarship in 1913, which enabled him to wander about Italy with his friend, Choukhaieff. That trip was followed by an excursion to the Balearic Isles and Spain, studying the Catalan primitives and El Greco. In 1917, he started on the above mentioned first visit to China and Japan, which was interrupted by the Russian revolution. In 1920, he took up his residence in Paris, and four years later he joined the famous motor trek across Africa, known as Citroën's Croisière Noire. Busy vacations were spent in Corsica, Tunisia, Capri and Greece. Some of the results of his travels had been published in large folios and aroused such favorable comment everywhere, that the invitation to be the artistic adviser of the Asiatic expedition in 1931 already referred to, was a foregone conclusion. On this hazardous journey he began to use color more extensively than ever before, and Jacovleff seemed to be born anew whenever the great caravan moved across a boundary from one strange country into another. He was never laden with old ballast and was able without any delay, to fathom the mystery which nature lends to the weirdest animate forms. Jacovleff not only saw through everything but with the aid of the magical power in his sensitive delicate fingers, which were like those of a great violin virtuoso,

he enabled his audience to share his pleasure, and study the mysterious evanescence of human life.

After the Asiatic expedition, however, the more his fame as a draughtsman grew, the more dissatisfied he became. I began to fear that he might become a prey to self-criticism. If you now praised a work of his, he dismissed it with a smile and a flippant phrase. The art world was seething with new trends and ideas, and Jacovleff became restless to reach new artistic goals and to become a salient figure in the field of contemporary painting. His quiet, bleached tonality, reminiscent of his unique copies of hundreds of the Pompeiian frescoes (now owned by the Fogg Art Museum), the delicate pearl-like nuances which flushed his pictures of marine still life, and the pale glamor of his Corsican paintings, now gave way to scherzos of vivid color. His palette became definitely richer and he felt that the time had come when he could become a creator, pure and simple. Real travels no longer preoccupied him. A new longing possessed him utterly, and it was not the old *nostalgie de partir*. He began to plan and dream of absolute liberation when he would launch himself on the final voyage into the realm of imaginative beauty.

A modest economic freedom must first be achieved, however, because he had several beloved dependents, and for that reason, in 1934, he accepted an invitation to direct the fortunes of the Boston Museum School of Fine Arts. Everyone connected with that institution soon recognized that a dynamic arresting personality, a constructive critic and an inspiring teacher was now in charge. He became absorbed in his work and the acumen of his utterances invested the slightest subject with a kind of enchantment. Nevertheless, it was a misfortune that his many duties prevented him for the time being, from attempting to carry out his real ambition. Furthermore, he never found time to write his book on draftsmanship which would surely have been an important contribution to the aesthetic philosophy of our time, if one may judge from a manuscript outline of a lecture and random notes taken down by students at his discourses. He declared that his main problem as a teacher was to furnish young artists the means for the development of their creative impulses, and to discipline them without destroying their personal primitive instincts. He adored Ingres, but he warned his listeners that the virtues of incomparable draftsmanship might become the weakness of the painter. Manual training had its intrinsic value as a tool which was good only when it carried out the truly artistic needs of its possessor. A knowledge of mediums and techniques was also

necessary to the artist, but only as grammar is to a poet. He had a passion for construction and definition and these can best be studied in the accented portions of the drawings which he made in classrooms. Art, he explained, was not a craft, nor was it mere representation, but the product of an able craftsman may well be a great work of art as well. In fact, he had little patience with the slovenly craftsmanship and limited power of many celebrated pedestalled contemporaries, and rather despised what George Meredith would have described as their "staggering pretentiousness." On the other hand, while he respected tradition highly, he hoped his pupils would achieve the authoritative mastery which gained the right to enjoy all the privileges of freedom. I always suspected that he wandered in the desert wastes of Africa and Asia, not seeking novel exotic material for his art, but like the immortal Doughty, to find that same freedom and "the subtle harmony of nature which the profane cannot hear, in that happy stillness and solitude."

In the course of one of his lectures, Jacovleff said, "I hate fanaticism, but I am myself a fanatic on the subject of toleration." He explained his theories in rather halting English which was amplified by brilliant actual demonstrations. Jacovleff scoffed at dry academic standards but when he swiftly painted an *académie* from the nude model before the school's faculty to explain his personal approach and technique, the result was dateless, worthy of an old master at his best. It became an unfinished figure impregnated with a vague melancholy which only life distills. Small wonder that admirers compared him to Holbein and Ingres.

When the American sojourn resulted in temporary financial independence, his artistic aspiration flared up again into a clear flame. Nineteenth century painting, as he had explained to his classes, had been in great part, a technical procedure in which the artists, with a few notable exceptions, set out to imitate as closely as possible, the appearance of a model at some particular time, in some special effect of light. The eye was a kind of mechanical lens and if the model moved or the light changed, the artist was lost. Like a camera, he could not continue. In the twentieth century the point of view changed and Jacovleff among others, sought to express personal emotions and reactions with color. His convictions, long a secret torment, now developed into an artistic religion. The unerring hand never lost its cunning. He could always make a faithful group like the vast "Asiatic Camp Fire," depending almost solely on his powerful visual memory, and the later drawings of his enchanting mother, the mask of his

countryman Rachmaninoff (one of the highest points of his complete achievement in portraiture) and the heads of some American negroes, are all surprising graphic works, but he was no longer keenly interested in such activities. Although he was a man of peculiar reticence who rarely unbosomed himself even to intimate friends, he confessed that he questioned the value of his widely acclaimed gifts because they happened to appeal not only to blasé experts, but also to ordinary taste and understanding. It was useless to remonstrate. Since their perfection no longer satisfied his artistic conscience, he must start anew from a different angle. Without thirsting for recognition, he determined not to float on the old currents and he saw his future through sanguine eyes. He was conscious that he had something absolutely new and personal to say and the seducing atmosphere of Picasso, Bracque, Rouault, Matisse and other contemporaries may have excited and intoxicated him. The philosophy of his friend Tchelitchev, probably influenced him also. Such artists would have starved in the old days and he did not wholly approve or imitate them. He did, however, admire wholeheartedly, their isolation and, when it existed, their sincerity. Never having been conventionally minded, he, too, would go on his own way, but unfortunately his short revolutionary period had no time to flower. It should not be assumed that he now sneered at old-fashioned beauty and attractiveness. During our warm arguments he agreed that the strange strident notes, and ugly or obscure thoughts, which won the approval of many poets, musicians, artists and snobbish intellectuals were a curse of our time. Nevertheless it may be said that as his aesthetics matured, he became definitely modern. His liberty, however, was always sternly disciplined as opposed to the anarchy of some advanced contemporaries who dared not submit their technical ability to either the old classical or the romantic school tests. Jacovleff could swim with the new tides, but he would never have to fear the mention of old names, like David or Delacroix.

He still visited the *Grande Chaumière* as well as the Zoological Gardens at Vincennes and made swift sketches from life with a dexterity which was the despair of his imitators, but now his colorful expressionism and freedom from all other artists' formulas began to take form in a series of truly remarkable, though tentative experiments. He poured out his talents in a fury of workmanship, and each of his swift, late realizations arouse one's curiosity as well as admiration. They are by no means of the nature of happy accidents, but the result of a fusion of his mature, artistic intellect



JACOVLEFF: VENUS
Martin Birnbaum, New York



JACOVLEFF: GREEK WOMEN
Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge (Greenville Winthrop Collection)



JACOVLEFF: A LAMA
Benjamin A. Jacvils, Westport, Conn.



JACOVLEFF: RACHMANINOFF
Private Collection



JACOVLEFF: AMERICAN NEGRESS
Private Collection

and his imagination. He was now skillfully juggling with startling color cadences. The fluent brush strokes, seemingly capricious, are packed with feeling. But alas, these pages are only promising buds suggesting new harmonies, new rhythms and new music in color, with an imaginative substructure. The convincing authority of the early drawings is absent, and perhaps he was expecting color to carry more than it really can, but in nearly all of these hastily created pictures there are passages of unmistakable originality. Among the most successful and complete examples, one recalls Miss Mabel Choate's pale Theseus struggling with the startling blue Minotaur; the late Grenville Lindall Winthrop's Greek Women; a ravishing rose-tinted Venus rising from a sea disturbed by Neptune's white steeds, and a seraglio of Odalises now in the writer's collection. There are dozens of others — bouquets of old-fashioned flowers, women gossiping around playing fountains, grotesque sea monsters, platters of fruit which are like explosions of delicate tints, Greek demi-gods, and other imaginary themes, all characterized by harmonious color schemes and a rapid increase in power and significance. Often they are charged with his emotional rapture. No one could ever attack Jacovleff's artistic integrity, and these last works, expressed, though incompletely, his bravest aspirations, and should be respected as such. Here he was trying to discover the highest purpose in himself. Hailed by a few discerning spirits as evidences of his insatiable curiosity in all things related to his art and the shadowy index of brilliant future accomplishment, they compose only a wonderful prelude to eternal silence. Death is a mocking demon, and to speculate on what would have followed the preliminary distinction and veiled loveliness of these final experiments, would be idle. Most of them now belong to his surviving sister, Sandra, who once sang leading roles on European operatic stages with the great Chaliapin.

Early in May, 1938, while he was preparing to leave Paris, he told me that all these sheets of fleeting notes would soon be destroyed and in his studio at Capri he would do the permanent work which he was impatient to begin and which he believed would be the solid lasting achievement of his career. I did not know that at that very moment his body was wracked with pain by a dread disease, which he bore with his customary courage and gallantry. While he was packing bundles and valises with requisites for his vacation, and describing a recent visit to Holland, I tried to while away his tedium by improvising and playing sustained arias on my violin. Suddenly, without warning, he casually started to make a large red and

black chalk drawing of me while I continued playing. Like Sargent, he talked while working, and he told me of the stimulating hours he had spent in Holland admiring Rembrandt's *Night Watch* in the little room which he called the "Sistine Chapel of the north." Until then I never fully realized with what impassioned rapidity he drew, how his unfaltering line quickened a figure into a vehemence of life, and how easily he could fuse his design with such character or personality as his posing model made claim to. The portrait shows me with my eyes almost closed, absorbed in my fiddling. The instrument is held firmly under my chin, the bow drawn on the strings near the frog, controlled by a flexible wrist which contrasts with the taut, wiry muscles of the left hand. A remarkable range of values is secured with merely sanguine and black chalk. Jacovleff did not subordinate his artistic equipment to the commonplace end of making a mere likeness of me, but this portrait, which was his last work, is a notable success from every point of view. At the moment, I can think only of Augustus John's portrait of the cellist, Madame Suggia, in the same musical category, and for that famous painting, John demanded more than seventy sittings. Jacovleff practically finished my portrait in one afternoon. Never did he seem to feel the powers of life more mightily. Henceforth, I said to myself, I would always refer to his technique as "pyrotechnique."

On the day I finished posing, we were listening to sonatas played by the Menuhin children at the Salle Pleyel, when Jacovleff complained of pains in his side, and he confided to me that he would go to a hospital in the morning, for a slight operation. The memory of the playing of those divine musicians, he said, would console him during his convalescence, and in a few short weeks we would be sporting together in the bay of Capri, at the Piccola Marina. When the concert ended, it was raining, and a thick mist enveloped Paris. He drove away in his little runabout to his last studio on the Rue Campagne Premiere, and I never saw him alive again. A few days after that memorable concert, what remained of his once superb body, destroyed by a malignant cancer, was decomposing under a blanket of scarlet peonies in the Russian church, filled with incense and reverberating with chanted hymns and the subdued sobbing of his many friends. His last wish that the ashes be strewn on the emerald waters of his beloved Capri, could not be fulfilled.

For me, Alexandre Jacovleff remains one of the two most highly cultivated men I ever knew. The diaphanously blonde Charles Ricketts was the other, but the Englishman, who knew all there was to know about art,

was primarily, a supreme talented aesthete, who created lovely things which always reminded critics in one way or another, of the works of artists whose secrets he had penetrated, whereas Jacovleff, in spite of his artistic scholarship, managed to express himself in a unique way. When youthful Keats or Rimbaud died, something new in poetry died with them, and although Jacovleff was over fifty when he passed on, he too was still a fervid, playful, promising spirit. It is futile to dwell on possibilities, but had his life been spared for a few more years, Jacovleff might well have become the great contemporary master of realistic expressionism, who could have redeemed our epoch from many of its ugly, miry fashions, and his untimely end was probably the greatest loss that creative art has suffered in our time.

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In addition to the seven volumes listed above, Jacovleff contributed short articles with reproductions of his works to magazines, like *L'Illustration* (Dec. 31, 1932), *Evocation du Theatre Chinois a l'Exposition Citroën Centre-Asie*, and *Vu* (No. 270, p. 751) *Ombres et Clartés d'Asie*.

Many critical articles about him appeared in English, French, German and Russian magazines. The catalogue of the Memorial Exhibition arranged by his American admirers at the Grand Central Galleries in 1939, contained appreciations by Royal Cortissoz, William Adams Delano, William James, William Edward Forbes, and a charming tribute by Malvina Hoffman.

There are also many otherwise unpublished drawings reproduced in the books describing the Citroën Expeditions — *La Croisière Noire* and *La Croisière Jaune* published by Plon in Paris in 1927 and 1933 respectively.

ABRAHAM RATTNER:
AN AMERICAN INTERNATIONALIST AT HOME

By ROBERT GOLDWATER
Queens College

THERE has been much interest recently, on the part of both critics and the public, in observing the effect of America and ways of American living upon several outstanding European artists whom the war has thrown into our midst. The production of Léger, Chagall, Zadkine, Masson, and Lipchitz — among others — has been watched to see how the change in environment would affect the style and subject of their work, and whether, consciously or not, they would become cognizant of their new surroundings. The painting of Abraham Rattner offers the historical instance and the personal experience in reverse: he is an American whom the war sent, not abroad, but home, and whose native surroundings, lived with and seen intimately for the first time in many years, have entered into the substance of his pictures.

"In a great many writings and in much conversation I have noted a tendency to consider the paintings of a man who has never been abroad more American than those of one who has been abroad. One may as well say that Benjamin Franklin left his American spirit in Philadelphia when he went to Europe." Thus wrote Robert Henri, who had indeed been abroad, was himself very American and one of the founders of the very American group of the *Eight*, for all that he learned of Hals and Manet. When Henri wrote he was thinking mainly of the subject-matter of art, and he was attacking an argument that was later employed by the exaggerated defenders of "regional schools," within the confines of a nationalist art. Today the nationalist argument has been extended to style rather than subject-matter, but here too Henri's objections are equally valid. Stated generously, the unconscious ground of the nationalist argument seems to be this: That is American which is based on the foreign masters of the past; that is *not* American which grows out of more recent styles, styles practised by artists in the United States and elsewhere. Unless we are willing to accept this way of thinking, there is — *a priori* — no more a single American style than there is a preconceived American subject-matter. Artists working under similar conditions of training, craft, and environment will in all likelihood produce work tending in a similar direction, but precisely for this reason there will be many such directions and a diversity of results,



RATTNER: THE SUN
Duncan Phillips, Washington, D. C.



RATTNER: FISHERBOY
Private Collection



RATTNER: THE JEWELLED CHRIST
Mr. and Mrs. Milton Lowenthal, New York

and what they will be only the artists themselves can establish. Thus in Rattner's case, his "style" — if, in the historical sense, we look for specific influences, origins and causes — grows out of the school of Paris, yet he has evolved his own version, a kind of painting that expresses his own personal and particular vision.

The special characteristics and unity of that style we will describe at more length in a moment. First it may be well to note that it touches on another of the central problems of the immediate future. There are many artists who in conversation proclaim that the task of painting at the present time is to incorporate the visual and compositional discoveries and revolutions accomplished in the course of the last half century into an art of new, direct, meaningful, and public subject-matter. There are many critics who agree with these artists and have encouraged their efforts, but there are few painters who have actually achieved anything successful in this direction. The task is of course not as simple as such a description makes it sound, and it cannot be carried out by fiat, even the fiat of the painter's own will. (See Stuart Davis' article in *Harpers*, December, 1943.)

The discoveries of "modern" art, from Cézanne, Seurat, and Gauguin on down to the present, are not simply pictorial devices, though they have given tremendous refinement and control to aesthetic vision. Their successful use, not their use as tricks, implies a particular emotional interpretation of the world, one which is "modern" because it can be rendered in no other way. For reasons which we cannot go into here, this style was developed upon objects of a neutral character (still-lives, nudes, studio interiors, etc.) or through the manipulation of forms that were not "objects" at all, as in the case of abstract art. Thus the *pathétique* of this kind of painting came to reside in the form itself, and the form was developed to the point where it alone carried the burden of the emotional meaning. The entire conscious pre-occupation of the artist was with the visual and emotional manipulation of his form, and he was thus quite naturally carried to the lengths of "distortion" which are still the despair of those for whom an "object" is a necessary point of departure. For this reason forms developed in this way cannot be taken over unaltered and incorporated into painting which really handles, rather than simply contains, "subject-matter." If such painting is to avoid disparity between what we must continue to call by the rather bad terms of "form" and "content," the artist's style and pictorial approach must undergo a transformation. He cannot ignore and he must not copy what has been done in the last

fifty years. Instead he must make use of it, just as he makes use of older styles, with the probability (and sometimes the compulsion), that because it is closer to him he will employ more of its language to make his own particular idiom. There have already been examples of this in American painting, notably the ways in which Marin transformed expressionism, and Dickinson, and Demuth, and Sheeler, (and sometimes Davis), have altered cubism in the direction of objective representation. Rattner's painting offers us further evidence that this can be done.

Let us take an instance of how a painter interested in the depiction of a human situation may build upon abstract forms: The cubists were first, back in 1911 and 1912, to perceive the abstract design possibilities of the printed word and type columns; they used it first in painted imitation, and later directly in their *papier-collés*. In such a picture as the *Morning Sun*, our artist has learned from them, but he has done more; he has managed, while keeping the internal pattern of the newspaper, and using it to define a plane which is an essential part of his composition, to preserve its unity as an object, its relation to the simple homely act of reading, and the contrast between it and the troubled features of the reader. Thus a picture of this sort has a quality of sentiment achieved through the interpretation by "abstract" methods of a subject full of associations, a contrast between the subject and its rigid formal construction — a quality at once of pity and of irony.

It is in pictures of this kind that Rattner's home environment begins to come through; pictures like the *People on Sixth Avenue*, *The Market*, *Kiosk*, *Butcher Shop*, in which observed scenes and views of city life, things in no way extraordinary, are made into patterns which, although they approach the abstract, are used to express, or to criticize and comment upon their subjects. If there is one theme that runs through these pictures, it is the closeness, the similarity, the brotherhood of people. For this the painter has found an expressive form of a frieze of heads so linked that each eye serves in two faces; a form at once plastically powerful in its ability to keep the surface of the canvas while suggesting depth through overlapping planes, and altogether clear and direct in its emotional implications. He can vary its use from the extremely winning umbrella-linked group of *April Showers*, where the vertical repetition is further expressive of the rain, to the terrible line of the soldiers in his *Crucifixion*.

All these pictures contain a large element of pathos, and of sentiment. To the realistic vision it may be surprising that emotion of this kind can



RATTNER: APRIL SHOWERS
Mr. and Mrs. Roy Neuberger, New York



RATTNER: PROPHECY
Richard de Rochemont, New York

be obtained through such "stylized" form. The chief, and characteristic, means is the eye — round, wide-open, direct — that looks straight out of the picture to establish immediate contact with the spectator, of a quality inwardly naive, outwardly hypnotic. It seems to me that Rattner's vision has moved towards this frontally aligned space and away from the deep, curved space of the sort he employed in *The Game of Cards* (1942), and earlier pictures.

In intimate compositions such as these, to which might be added *The Bride*, *Family Wedding Day Portrait*, and the versions of *The Fisherman*, the artist's American environment has entered into his painting. The traditional American interest in subject has been fused with "that feeling of plastic interpretation," which, as Rattner says, "is one of the great French attributes." But he also has a profound interest in subjects of more universal application and general symbolic meaning. As his notebooks attest, he is greatly concerned with the message of his painting: "I have always considered," he says, "that painting is an art the scope of which is so great that the craftsmanship and technical phases become incidental. The interpretation in plastic means of what in poetry is poetry, or in music is music, or in sculpture is sculpture, but which in painting is painting. The final result in the art of painting could and should aim to be a transcendent achievement — a built structure impregnated with spiritual livingness." This is an ambitious, all embracing intention, and its force explains the religious and allegorical nature of many of these paintings, such as *And There Was Darkness Over the Land*, *Crucifixion*, and "1492," and the quasi-mystical manner in which they are treated. The intensity of Rattner's feeling about the importance of painting and his own mission as a painter, his feeling for the expressive quality of his art and his oneness with it, explains too how it is that those who know him recognize that what is really an expressive, soul-tortured self-portrait appears in many of his pictures.

These figures, and many others appearing on his canvases are, in the conventional sense, ugly. For the reason why Rattner feels that this must be so, we can turn once again to his notebooks: "The artist deforms the human figure not because he desires to make the spectator laugh, but because his pity, his sensibilities, his transcendent nature, his idealism, have been so outraged that he has to give expression to his view of a world of beastly, diabolical men and women turned into monsters. The hypocrisy, the falseness, the weakness of character of human beings must be treated as anything else which is ugly and unbeautiful."

In the passage we have quoted above Henri said in explanation of his point on "national" art: "After all the error rests in the mistaken idea that the subject of a painting is the object painted." Rattner puts the same idea more strongly, and in so doing partially contradicts what he has said above. But we must not expect a painter to be consistent: his writing expresses interests all simultaneously present in his art, whose dominance varies in his thought, as he is variously preoccupied with the problems of his craft. "In painting, the 'subject' and the 'motif' should not be confused. If the painting is a creative work, the 'subject' — if there was any at all in the artist's mind — was not important; the motif was his chief interest . . . The subject can be one thing, yet in the painting itself the complete opposite would be expressed. A religious idea may appear to be the subject, yet the motif would be the human forces expressed. A painting of the head of a saint could very well be the interpretation of the ignobility of man. Thus the motif of the artist would be the finding of the most expressive form for the exact opposite of the 'picture subject.'" At first glance this kind of reasoning seems like wilful paradox, the deliberate creation of a division between "form" and "content" where there should be expressive unity. But what Rattner is driving at is the rendering of his subject through the use of a form so unexpected that it is itself a comment. It explains the brilliant color and striking contrasts, hues that another painter might employ in a "gay" picture, with which he clothes many of his tragic themes. And *There Was Darkness Over the Land*, shown last summer at the Museum of Modern Art, makes use of this device, as does the later *Clowns and Kings*. It is clearly a difficult method to follow, since in the end the abstract design, however brilliant, must maintain its relationship to the subject, and not assume its own divorced existence. We are familiar with the method in the work of Rouault, and, on another psychological level, in that of Paul Klee; and when it is successful it is extremely satisfying, since it embraces both the emotional and the constructive demands of the art. These paintings, and pictures like the *Judges* and the *Jewelled Christ* are indeed commensurable with those of Rouault; the two artists talk something of the same moral language and each is far from the cool construction and purely intellectual arrangement that is generally associated with the "school of Paris." The American places a symbolic event in every-day surroundings and suggests an ironic contrast both within the picture (as we have explained above), and with the traditional hierarchical rendering of these scenes.

It is thus clear from his words and from his painting, that however vital Rattner's interest in subject-matter, his art has nothing in common with illustration of a theme. As we have said, he has undertaken to fuse some of the enormous plastic means of contemporary art with a vital subject-matter, and at times it is this physical quality of painting as such that carries the day, so that he loses himself in the development of a rich tactile surface. His notes too attest to this; for example he says: "Painting means more than an interest in the spectacle before the eyes, or before the intellect; painting means paint itself, a virile command over the *matière*, an understanding of the power and possibilities of paint and color, and the impossibilities; an honest intention of the painter's intimacy with the palette, canvas, brush, pigment, and medium."

Rattner's is an ambitious art; precisely for this reason the work he has already done has its own distinctive character, and the work he will do in the future bears watching.

ART IN POLITICS

By E. MAURICE BLOCH

New York City

A LITTLE more than a hundred years ago an important political campaign was in full swing and the people entered into the spirit of it with much the same enthusiasm we find today. In October, 1844, a great Whig convention in favor of Henry Clay for President was held in Boonville, Missouri, and full accounts of the proceedings were colorfully described in contemporary Whig-supporting newspapers. It was customary at these gatherings for the various counties to carry in procession elaborate banners honoring their choice. A certain amount of competition is revealed among the counties represented in their efforts to exhibit the most attractive and striking banners. The best available artists were employed for this purpose.

This fact is especially interesting to us because the Missouri Artist, George Caleb Bingham, was one of those called upon at this time to paint processional banners for the Boonville Convention. Four years earlier the artist had painted Tippecanoe banners for Saline County for the convention

held at Rocheport, Missouri.¹ Bingham's reputation as an outstanding artist was already an established fact among the people of the state. In a letter written to his friend, James Sidney Rollins of Columbia, dated September 23, 1844, from Boonville, the painter discusses his designs as follows:

"... With reference to the banner which you desire for your delegation to the convention, I can merely state, that I shall be happy to execute it, provided you allow me to paint it on linnen (sic), the only material on which I can make an effective picture.

I am now just beginning one for Cooper, and one for Howard, each 7 by 8 feet — on one I shall give a full length portrait of Clay as the Statesman with his American System operating in the distance, on the other I shall represent him as the plain farmer of Ashland — each of them will also have appropriate designs on the reverse side, and will be so suspended, as to be easily (sic) borne by four men walking in the order of the procession. The cost will be from fifty to sixty dollars each.

They will be substantial oil pictures and may be preserved as relics of the present political campaign. If your delegation would be pleased with a similar banner as "Old Hal" is already fully appropriated, I would suggest for the design as peculiarly applicable to your county, old Daniel Boone himself engaged in one of his death struggles with an Indian, painted as large as life, it would make a picture that would take with the multitude, and also be in accordance with historical truth. It might be emblematical (sic) also of the early state of the west, while on the other side I might paint a landscape with 'peaceful fields and lowing herds' indicative of his present advancement in civilization.

It should be full as large as those I am preparing for Cooper and Howard and borne in the procession in like manner. If you approve of my suggestions or see proper to make others, write to me as soon as possible, as I shall have but little time to spare.

Yours Most respectfully

GEO. C. BINGHAM

P.S. On the reverse side of the Howard banner I intended to portray a large buffaloe (sic) just broken loose from his keepers making the poke stalks fly to the right and left in the fury of his unbridled career."²

There are many stories told of Bingham's ability to execute commissions in a short space of time and this is certainly proved by the above letter. With the convention a little more than two weeks off, the artist speaks of "just beginning" one of the banners, a work "7 by 8 feet" in dimensions, while another of similar size, and yet another, remain to be done. At the same time he is quite prepared to accept one more commission to be completed within the same limited period!

¹C. B. Rollins, "Some Recollections of George Caleb Bingham," *Missouri Historical Review*, XX (4), 1926, 469.

²Original A. L. S. in the State Historical Society, Columbia, Mo. (Rollins Manuscript Collection).

The great Boonville Convention was a gala affair, comparable in excitement and glamor to our own nominating conventions. A local reporter vividly describes the events:

THE CONVENTION

The 10th and 11th days of October 1844 were days long to be remembered by the gallant Whigs of Missouri, and will be referred(sic) to in future as the days on which assembled in our city the most glorious Convention that our State has ever witnessed . . .

As early as the 8th the Delegates commenced coming in, and by the evening of the 9th the city was crowded to overflowing. All the hotels in the city and every private house into which admittance could be obtained, were literally cramed(sic). On the morning of the 10th at an early hour, the thundering of the cannon commenced. At sun rise the National salute was fired; and shortly after the crowd commenced being swelled by the pouring in of new delegations from all quarters, and in the course of a few hours the streets presented an almost solid mass of people.

On the 9th the streets were very dry, the dust was almost beyond enduring and all were wishing for rain. When they arose in the morning to their surprise they found their wishes gratified with a fine shower which had fallen during the night.

The rain continued to fall during the morning of the 10th, which caused some delay in forming the procession, but towards noon it cleared off and the procession was formed and passed to the stand in the southern skirts of the city, in the following order as nearly as we can remember:

First, the splendid band of music from the Jefferson Barracks.

Next the Pilot Grove and Pisgah Rangers — an independent cavalry company.

Then the immense delegation from Howard, bearing a most splendid banner, on one side of which our noble champion is represented advocating the 'American System.' 'All the great interests' of America are here represented. On one hand is a fortress with our National flag waving above it; on the other, and to the rearward is the ocean, crowded with shipping, and farther in the front is a farmer with his plough, a railroad, a number of dingy manufacturing establishments, the capital and other national buildings, while Mr. Clay, with his hand extended towards them, exclaims in his own impressive manner, 'All these great interests are confided to the protection and care of government!' — The portrait of Mr. Clay as well as the entire picture, is an admirable specimen of painting, and both as to design and execution is highly creditable to the artist. On the reverse side of the banner is represented a prairie, in its uncultivated state, with a herd of buffalo roving across it . . .

Next came the Washington Delegation bearing a beautiful banner, on one side representing the miners working their iron and lead mines. On the reverse side is a representation of commerce, manufacture and agriculture, with Henry Clay in the midst . . .

The Boston Delegation came next, bearing quite a humorous banner. A coon is represented snugly seated on a limb of a sturdy old Ash, while a crowd of men below are vainly endeavoring to beat him down with poke stalks . . .

Next came the Boone Delegation, bearing a handsomely painted banner. — Device: on one side a large fat coon, rolling a ball over a cluster of poke stalks; on the reverse side: a waggon(sic), driven by Polk, containing three individuals, including the driver,

and drawn by a poor old horse that is just ready to break down; over which is inscribed, 'Bound for Texas' . . .

And finally came the Ashland Club — composed of the young men of Boonville — and the Boonville Juvenile Clay Club. The Ashland Club bore decidedly the most beautiful banner we have ever seen. On one side was represented the plain, unassuming(sic) but noble farmer of Ashland on his farm; on the reverse side is an Eagle perched high on a firm, immovable rock. The banner is without lettering — save the name of the Club — the devices alone being sufficiently significant. The Juvenile Club also bore a most beautiful banner; on one side of which is represented a mill-boy riding merrily through the slashes of Hanover to mill; on the reverse side is a little fellow carving the name of Henry Clay. A mere description of the devices on these banners, however, conveys no idea of their real beauty. They, as also the Howard banner, were painted by Mr. Bingham, a noble young artist of this city.³

The reporter, we note, was especially strong in his praise of the banners painted by Bingham, and even included a little "free advertising" by specifically pointing out to his readers those done by the artist who at that time was residing in Boonville.

According to the letter to Rollins, the artist had evidently been asked to paint a banner for Boone County and was prepared to do the work, suggesting what he considered a suitable design. The Convention reporter does not identify the creator of the Boone County banner, although he very carefully announces Bingham as the author of the Cooper and Howard banners. We must conclude, therefore, that the Boone County work was probably assigned to another artist.

The disposition and fate of the Bingham banners has greatly concerned historians for many years. An investigation made some time ago suggested that all had been destroyed by fire.⁴ This may be partially true, for the Howard and Cooper County Ashland Club banners are lost to us. In fact, there is every indication that the magnificent Howard banner met an unfortunate fate the night after the procession. The Boonville newspaper reports:

"On last Friday night (October 11) some villain(sic) went into the courthouse where the whig banners were placed, and cut several gashes in the portrait of Mr. Clay, on the Howard banner. One gash, several inches in length was cut across the throat. Our opponents must be very much pushed for some method of venting their spleen against Mr. Clay and the whigs when they resort to such meanness . . . Mr. Clay was represented as delivering one of his most eloquent and patriotic speeches in behalf of the American interests; and while so doing he is now represented as being assassinated!"⁵

³"*The Boonville Observer*," October 15, 1844, 2-1.

⁴*Op. cit.*, *Missouri Historical Review*, 471.

⁵*Op. cit.*, "*The Boonville Observer*," 2-3.



GEORGE CALEB BINGHAM: THE MILL BOY
Mr. Leslie Cowan, Columbia, Missouri

One of the most important Bingham discoveries was made not long ago when the banner of the Boonville Juvenile Clay Club was brought to light, in the possession of Mr. Leslie Cowan in Columbia, Missouri. It closely follows the description quoted from the *Boonville Observer*, representing Henry Clay as "a mill-boy riding merrily through the slashes of Hanover to mill," and is therefore one of the three banners painted by the artist between late September and the opening of the convention on October 10, 1844. The little figure, riding a chestnut-brown pony, is set within a broad landscape spreading far into the distance on all sides. Bits of foliage are suggested. The picture has been crudely mounted on stretchers, about 37 $\frac{1}{4}$ " H. x 46 $\frac{1}{2}$ " W. with overlaps at top and bottom indicating the painted canvas to have been originally larger, but had been cut down.

As mentioned in his letter to Rollins, Bingham reveals his intention to paint the banners on "linnen" for permanency and for preservation as works of art and "relics of the present political campaign." Thus the historical turn of mind which was to distinguish this remarkable man in so many other instances, is revealed for the first time.

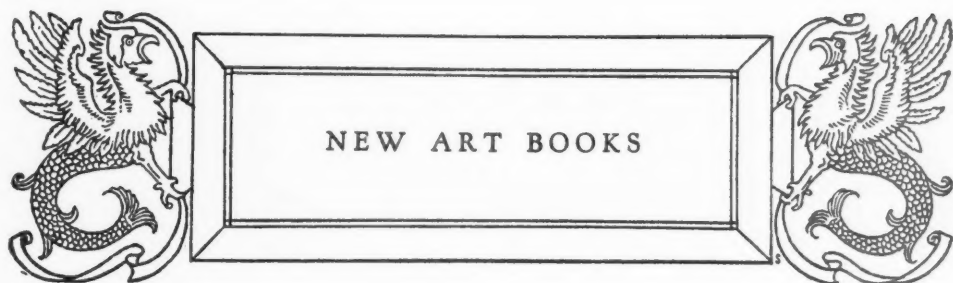
A closer examination of the work indicates the maturing style of the young painter. The handling is extremely painterly, rendered freely and broadly, with little attention to detail. It reveals the tremendous progress in the stylistic development of the artist during the period from 1834 to 1844. The results of his few months of study at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia from late in 1837 to June, 1838, as well as his acute observation of the works of contemporary painters in the East, is clearly seen. The important strides made by the artist in the ten years since he first began his career is observed by a comparison with the rather brittle modeling which characterized his portraits of 1834-35. Even the portraits dating from the period immediately following his Philadelphia sojourn, still retaining a certain firmness, although more subtly felt, have nothing of the sophistication of the forties, revealed in the *Mill Boy*. A detail of the head may be compared very favorably with the *Boy with the Torn Hat* by Thomas Sully (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), painted in 1820, and conceivably known to Bingham. The influence of Sully on the painter in these years is undeniable. Although there was probably no personal contact between the men at this time, the popularity and prestige of Sully was at its height in fashionable Philadelphia circles, and the products of his brush were to be seen at all the important exhibitions.

Despite the many damages and the need of cleaning visible on the *Mill*

Boy canvas, the treatment of light already reveals the artist's use of what this writer prefers to call a "golden" light, the manipulation of which he later developed through closer contact with the German school at Düsseldorf. The light, entering the picture at the upper left, envelops the entire work with its warm, glowing tone. The sky, spreading far above the little figure of the boy, is cloudless and painted in a warm green tone suggestive of a vast air-filled expanse.

The importance of the discovery of the *Mill Boy* can hardly be overestimated, especially in any consideration of the oeuvre of George Caleb Bingham. The value of the work as a historical relic of a hotly contested campaign is certainly not to be denied. In our estimation of the painting of the Missouri Artist, it remains one of the more important examples of the type of genre which has placed the artist in the front ranks within that category. The *Mill Boy*, as the earliest genre picture by Bingham we now possess to which a definite date can be assigned with certainty, fills a gap and thus makes possible a more complete conception of the artistic achievement of the painter during this little-known period of his career.





ARCHAIC ATTIC GRAVESTONES. By Gisela M. A. Richter. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1944. XVI, 166 pp., 108 figures, \$2.50.

In an attractive volume with many excellent illustrations the scholarly author traces the development of the archaic sepulchral stelae of Attica from 620 to 450 B. C. Stylistic comparisons receive particular attention as a means of determining chronology. More consideration might have been given to the sources and significance of details since the sources throw light on the significance which was the "final cause" of the series.

Among the very important details is the sphinx which crowned the stelae of the first half of the sixth century. The author sees in it a beautiful guardian of the tomb. The possibility of a Dionysiac meaning is not entertained. The hybrid somehow became associated with the god of wine. On early coins of Chios the sphinx which antedates that of the stelae is regarded by Head (*Hist. Num.* 2, p. 599) as probably symbolic of the cultus of Dionysus. Near the sphinx on one type is an amphora or wine-jar and a vine. The rosette in front of a sphinx on another coin may have no more meaning than that on the abacus which supported one of the Attic sphinxes (fig. 39). More important is the famous Naxian sphinx at Delphi because Dionysus was the chief deity of the Naxians. Their earliest coin-type, of the sixth century, is a cantharus, the cup of the god. Later the head of Dionysus appears on the obverse of the coins with other Dionysiac emblems on the reverse. The Naxian was set up near the temple of Apollo who at Delphi was closely associated with Dionysus. What was the reason for the dedication? Dionysus, torn to pieces by the Titans, had been buried near the Apolline tripod in the oracular temple at Delphi and there had come to life again. The Naxian sphinx like the sphinx on nearly contemporary gems which pounces upon a prostrate male figure was a symbol of the seizure and tearing of the god as was the griffin on another gem (Furtwaengler, *Die Antiken Gemmen* pl. VI, 32; VII, 7; VI, 30). The griffin with its beak and claws is completely raptorial; the leonine sphinx partly so. The Naxian dedication alluded to the experience of Dionysus which was of deep significance to his worshippers because it was a guarantee that they too would return to life. This explains the presence of the sphinx on the Attic gravestones. The Orphic tablets promised the Dionysiac initiate that he would be god instead of mortal, i. e. that he like the god would live again.¹

It is of the greatest importance to realize that at the time the Attic stelae were set up the Orphic doctrines were in vogue at Athens. This is shown by the fact that

¹For other interpretations of the Naxian sphinx see Homolle, *Fouilles des Delphes* IV, 1, p. 54.

Onomacritus in the days of the Peisistratidae composed orgies for Dionysus and in a poem placed the responsibility for the sufferings of Dionysus, i. e. the laceration of the god, upon the Titans (Pausanias VIII, 37, 5). This service of Onomacritus must have been rendered in response to demand at Athens and presupposes a growing popularity of the Orphic cult throughout the sixth century. It is possible that the doctrine of the dismemberment of the god owed this popularity in part to Ionic sources, and that the sphinx was the monumental contribution of Ionia to Attic symbolism. The early Attic sphinx is definitely Ionic rather than Egyptian, and incidentally this fact may incline one to believe that the capital, upon which the earliest example is set (fig. 30; cf. fig. 2) and which the author derives from Egypt, had the same immediate provenance as the sphinx itself. The profile of this capital should be compared with that of a Cypriote sarcophagus in the Metropolitan Museum (*Antike Denkmäler* III, pl. 6).

The archaic gravestones reveal other Dionysiac details. Of singular interest is the Theban stele in Boston (fig. 8) which represents a young man holding in his up-raised left hand a spray of two pomegranates and in the other an oil-flask. He is not merely an athlete because athletes as such did not carry a cluster of pomegranates nor does his garland mark him necessarily as a victor in athletic contests. The significance of these pomegranates is revealed by another gravestone of later date (*Arch. Ephemeris* 1920, pl. III). On its front are painted two pomegranates. There may have been more than two originally. These allude of course to Persephone, the goddess of Hades, just as the cantharus which is the sole decoration of a third Theban gravestone (*ibid.* p. 30, fig. 11) alludes to Dionysus who was early identified with the god of Hades.² These same symbols appear on Spartan sepulchral stelae where the cantharus is held by Dionysus and the pomegranate by Persephone. The deities are apparently offering the cup and the fruit to a man and a woman, the deceased, who have descended to Hades. Here as in the Boeotian stelae the same eschatology finds expression. Furthermore Boeotian contacts with Etruria make it probable that the spray of pomegranates which a female figure carries in an archaic Etruscan sepulchral plaque (*J. H. S.* 1889, p. 244, fig. 2) conveyed the same idea that it did in the approximately contemporary Theban stele. The young man of the Theban stele may have been an athlete but he was also an Orphic initiate who crowned and anointed (with oil from his own flask?) will descend to Hades for the eternal symposium which the Orphics believed would be their reward for a virtuous life (Plato, *Republic* 363c).

These considerations reveal the significance of the magnificent stele in the Metropolitan Museum known as "the brother and sister stele." The young man like the one of the Boeotian gravestone holds a pomegranate in his left hand from the wrist of which an oil-flask is suspended. The small female figure before the youth is probably not his sister but rather his wife, necessarily of smaller stature than he because of lack of space. They are the more monumental counterparts of the man and the woman who stand before the gods of the underworld in the Spartan gravestone. She holds a flower as does the woman of the Spartan stele and another woman in the relief of the Harpy tomb in Lycia.

The Dionysiac significance of this sepulchral art is evident again in the stele of Lyseas (fig. 94). This offers an example of sacred punning. In its inscription *sema* is followed by *semon*. Apart from the play the composer of the inscription may have

²Four other stelae with canthari are listed by de Ridder, *B. C. H.*, 46 (1922) p. 278.

had in mind the Orphic mystic pun that the *soma* "body" was a *sema* "tomb." One may even suspect that the dedicant of the memorial thought of Lyseas as Lysios, a title of Dionysus at Thebes and elsewhere. The mysteries of the god were known as *lyseioi teletai* (Hesychius s. v.). Thus Lyseas appears as Lysios just as later in Athens the name of Demetrius was linked with that of Demeter. The Orphic, as already remarked, believed that he would be god instead of mortal. So Lyseas holds the cup of Lysios out of which he will drink his reward in Hades. He also holds a cluster of laurel stems. Again an Etruscan tomb-painting throws light upon this detail. In the *Tomba delle Iscrizioni* at Corneto (Poulsen, *Etruscan Tomb Painting* p. 19, fig. 12) on the left side of a false door is a symposiast who holds a cantharus turned sideways to show that it is empty as does Lyseas in the Athenian stele. On the other side of the door are two men one of whom holds garlands for a symposium while the second carries sprays of laurel, one spray in his upraised hand as does Lyseas. Two Etruscan symposiasts then hold the same object as Lyseas. The conclusion seems sound that the sculptor conceived of Lyseas as departing this world for a symposium in Hades. Certainly one should expect some reflection of the Orphic-Dionysiac doctrine about the destiny of the dead in the Athens of Peisistratus who instituted there the great Dionysia and bore the Dionysiac title of Bakis.

The origin of the complex stele such as "the brother and sister stele" is deserving of more attention than it receives in the study under review. Certainly the evidence of the contemporary sarcophagi of Clazomenae must be considered. Compare the stele with the terracotta sarcophagus published many years ago (*Arch. Ephemeris* 1907, pl. 9), keeping in mind the fact that it, like others of its sort, was set upright during the funeral rites. Both the stele and the sarcophagus have in ascending order (1) a low base (2) a panel for a painting (3) a long "anta" which in the case of the sarcophagus did not need a representation of the deceased since he himself was completely visible (4) another panel for a painting (5) a palmette pattern and (6) a sphinx in the round on top of the stele, and four sphinxes on the side of the abacus of the anta of the sarcophagus. On a second sarcophagus the anta is crowned with a painted sphinx (*B. C. H.* 1913, pl. 15); on a third, fourth and fifth a griffin, a siren, and a silenus respectively takes the place of the sphinx (*B. C. H.*, 1913, pl. 12; *Ant. Denkm.* I, pl. 45; *ibid.* pl. 46, no. 3). The silenus is Dionysiac enough. Firmicus Maternus says that Zeus constructed a temple as a tomb for the slain god and appointed Silenus as its priest. The qualifications of the griffin as a symbol of the fate of Dionysus have already been noticed.

The conception of the dead as divine was responsible for the form and erect position of the sarcophagus. It thus became a small temple with an image of its divine occupant. The same conception explains the pedimental gravestones of the fourth century at Athens and the so-called sarcophagus of the mourning women which is a miniature temple of the Ionic order. The conclusion seems reasonable that the complex stele of the Metropolitan Museum was in origin the anta of the entrance to a tomb detached and separately used just as a column was detached from architecture for independent use. The standing figures of the stelae regularly face to the right, a position which may mean that the prototype of the stele was the left anta of a sepulchral shrine. This conclusion would account for the tall narrow shape of the stele. It would also account for the curious guilloche pattern that runs up both vertical edges of the fragmentary example which is also in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 66). The pattern is to be compared with the common guilloche decoration on

the antae of the terracotta sarcophagi. Both monuments derived the detail from a common architectural source. The same origin may be assumed for the black-painted background of the base panel of the stele just mentioned. The same effect was obtained in the frieze of the Erechtheum where the marble figures were set against black Eleusinian limestone. As for the position of a stele at the left of an entrance to a tomb one may cite that which was discovered in situ at Sardis (Buckler, *Lydian Inscriptions* p. 13, fig.).

—GEORGE W. ELDERKIN, *Princeton University*

ABSTRACT AND SURREALIST ART IN AMERICA. By Sidney Janis. New York, Reynal & Hitchcock, 1944. 146 pp., 100 plates (10 in color), \$6.50.

This is perhaps the best effort to date to explain the two trends of contemporary painting least understood by the general public. The text is brief, and the book profusely illustrated. The artists have had an opportunity to explain their individual positions in a few sentences with each illustration.

The book is divided into five themes. First the sources of twentieth century European painting are discussed, with the influence of such great artists as Picasso, Kandinsky, De Chirico, Braque and Gris appropriately appraised.

Next the American pioneers of this century are studied and artists of the high calibre of John Marin, Max Weber, Charles Demuth and Lyonel Feininger are seen to be only slightly behind their more famous European contemporaries in artistic stature.

Then the current abstract artists in America are carefully examined. Here many artists are illustrated but the strongest case seems to be made for Stuart Davis, Abraham Rattner, Karl Knaths, Carl Holty and C. S. Price.

American surrealist painters are next studied and here the opinions given are more controversial. Again many artists are appraised, and speculation will undoubtedly go on for years as to their merits. Loren McIver, Mark Tobey, Walter Quirt and Mark Rothko would appear at present to be among the most interesting of this group.

Lastly a group of artists in exile painting in America are shown and studied. Here Mr. Janis makes out a vigorous case for such men as Mondrian, Leger, Chagall, Dali and Masson showing that the American environment is a kindly one to the artist.

We feel that there is too much obvious attempt to classify artists in schools by Mr. Janis. Aside from this, the book is a good one on a difficult subject.

—ROY R. NEUBERGER, *New York City*

BOOKS RECEIVED

HISPANIC SILVERWORK. By Ada Marshall Johnson. New York, Hispanic Society of America, 1944. 308 pp., 266 illus., \$4.00.

MASTERPIECES OF PAINTING FROM THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART. Edited by Huntington Cairns and John Walker. New York, Random House, 1944. 182 pp., 85 color plates, \$6.50.

THE ENJOYMENT OF THE ARTS. Edited by Max Schoen. New York, Philosophical Library, 1944. 336 pp., illus., \$5.00.

THE WORLD AS SPECTACLE. By Gustav E. Mueller. New York, Philosophical Library, 1944. 208 pp., \$3.00.

DECORATIVE ARTS IN THE NETHERLANDS. By Paul Bromberg. New York, Netherlands Information Bureau, 1944. 62 pp., illus.

GEORGE GROSZ DRAWINGS. With an introduction by the artist. New York, H. Bittner & Co., 1944. 52 plates, 3 hand colored, \$12.00.

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